

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 OSLO 00070 071818Z

53

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PM-04 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 L-03 H-02

PRS-01 ACDA-05 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 DODE-00 SSC-01

COME-00 EB-07 LAB-04 SIL-01 /070 W

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P 071417Z JAN 76

FM AMEMBASSY OSLO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0935

C O N F I D E N T I A L OSLO 0070

E.O.11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR,PGOV,NO

SUBJECT: RECOMMENDATION FOR PRESIDENTIAL MESSAGES ON NORWEGIAN
GOVERNMENT CHANGE NEXT WEEK.

REFS: (A) OSLO 5520

(B) OSLO 4159

SUMMARY: PRIME MINISTER BRATTELI IS EXPECTED TO TURN
OVER THE REINS OF NORWAY'S GOVERNMENT TO HIS LABOR
PARTY COLLEAGUE ODVAR NORDLI NEXT WEEK. I RECOMMEND
THAT MESSAGES BE SENT FROM THE PRESIDENT TO BOTH MEN
WHEN THE CHANGE TAKES PLACE. END SUMMARY.

1. IT NOW SEEMS CLEAR THAT THE LABOR GOVERNMENT OF
PRIME MINISTER TRYGVE BRATTELI WILL COME TO AN END
ON JAN 16. IF ALL GOES ACCORDING TO PLAN IT WILL
BE REPLACED BY ANOTHER MINORITY LABOR GOVERNMENT
HEADED BY ODVAR NORDLI. WHEN THE CHANGE TAKES PLACE
I RECOMMEND THAT MESSAGES BE SENT FROM THE PRESIDENT
TO MR. BRATTELI SALUTING HIM FOR HIS CONTRIBUTIONS
TO US-NORWEGIAN RELATIONS AND TO THE ALLIANCE AND
WISHING HIM WELL IN THE YEARS AHEAD, AND TO MR. NORDLI
CONGRATULATING HIM ON ASSUMING OFFICE AND EXPRESSING
THE WISH FOR CONTINUED CLOSE COOPERATION BETWEEN OUR
TWO COUNTRIES.

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 OSLO 00070 071818Z

2. ACCORDING TO THE COMPROMISE AGREEMENT REACHED AT LABOR PARTY NATIONAL CONVENTION IN SEPTEMBER(REFTEL B) PRIME MINISTER BRATTELI WILL STEP DOWN AS GOVERNMENT HEAD. THE SCENARIO FOR THE CHANGE WILL BE SET IN MOTION JAN 9 WHEN THE PARTY CENTRAL COMMITTEE CONVENES IN OSLO TO DISCUSS PRINCIPLES FOR THE COMPOSITION OF THE NEW GOVERNMENT, AND ON JAN 11 THE COMMITTEE WILL REVIEW THE PROPOSED MINISTERIAL LIST FOR THE NORDLI GOVERNMENT. ON JAN 12 THE PARTY'S NATIONAL COMMITTEE WILL MEET TO DISCUSS THE CONCLUSIONS OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE. SHORTLY THEREAFTER THE PARTY'S STORTING GROUP WILL ASSEMBLE. WHEN THE GROUP CONCURS WITH THE DECISION OF THE NATIONAL COMMITTEE NORDLI WILL GO TO THE PALACE TO BRIEF KING OLAV V ON THE PROPOSED GOVERNMENT'S COMPOSITION. NORDLI WILL RETURN TO THE STORTING TO ANNOUNCE THE NEW GOVERNMENT'S COMPOSITION AT A PRESS CONFERENCE. THE NEW GOVERNMENT IS EXPECTED TO BE APPOINTED BY THE KING IN COUNCIL SOON THEREAFTER, BUT MOST LIKELY ON JAN 16 WHEN THE COUNCIL ORDINARILY MEETS. ON THAT DAY BRATTELI'S GOVERNMENT WILL END.

3. THE FOLLOWING BACKGROUND INFORMATION MAY BE USEFUL FOR PREPARING MESSAGE TO BRATTELI: THE PRESIDENT SAW BRATTELI IN JUNE AT THE BRUSSELS NATO MEETING AND IN SEPTEMBER AT HELSINKI DURING THE CSCE SUMMIT. BRATTELI,WHO WILL BE 66 ON JAN 11, IS THE LAST OF NORWAY'S MAJOR LABOR LEADERS WHOSE ADULT LIFE AND POLITICAL EXPERIENCE SPANS THE DEPRESSION,WARTIME OCCUPATION AND POST-WAR PERIOD. WITNESS TO THE FAILURE OF NORWAY'S NEUTRALITY POLICY AND LEFT FOR DEAD IN A NAZI CONCENTRATION CAMP, BRATELLI RETURNED TO NORWAY AFTER THE WAR TO PLAY AN IMPORTANT PART IN EXTABLISHING NORWAY'S SUPPORT OF NATO AND ITS PURSUIT OF CLOSER ATLANTIC AND EUROPEAN TIES. VICTIM OF ENEMPLOYMENT AND HARDSHIP DURING THE DEPRESSION, HE TOOK AN ACTIVE AND LEADING PART IN SHAPING AND DIRECTING THE RISING LABOR PARTY'S PROGRAM TO PROVIDE THE ECONOMIC SECURITY AND OPPORTUNITY WHICH HAS COME TO CHARACTERIZE THE COUNTRY'S SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC WELFARE STATE.

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 OSLO 00070 071818Z

4. HE IS PERSONALLY VERY FRIENDLY TOWARD THE US. HIS AWARENESS OF THE CONSISTENT AND DEEP-ROOTED LONG-TERM TIES BETWEEN NORWAY AND OUR COUNTRY IS REINFORCED BY HIS CLOSE FAMILY LINKS WITH AMERICA. IN OCTOBER HE AND HIS WIFE RANDI MADE A PRIVATE TRIP TO THE MIDDLE-WEST TO VISIT RELATIVES AND TO CELEBRATE THE 150TH ANNIVERSARY OF ORGANIZED NORWEGIAN EMIGRATION TO THE US. HE HAS ALWAYS HAD AN OPEN DOOR FOR THE US

AMBASSADOR AND HAS NEVER FAILED TO BE RESPONSIVE WHEN I THOUGHT IT WAS NECESSARY TO MAKE REQUESTS OF HIM.

5. IN NORWEGIAN POLITICS BRATTELI IS A SYMBOL OF LOYALTY,HONESTY AND DIGNITY. SON OF A COBBLER AND VIRTUALLY SELF-EDUCATED HE HAS BECOME AN INDIVIDUAL OF EXTRAORDINARY INTELLECT AND WIDE POLITICAL EXPERIENCE. HE ENTERED POLITICS IN THE 'TWENTIES HAS BEEN A MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT FOR 25 YEARS, CABINET MINISTER THREE TIMES AND PRIME MINISTER IN 1971-72 AND FROM 1973 UNTIL NOW. WHEN HE STEPS DOWN NEXT WEEK HE WILL CONTINUE TO SERVE IMPORTANTLY IN THE STORTING,MOST LIKELY EITHER AS ITS PRESIDENT OR CHAIRMAN OF THE FOREIGN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE.

6. NORDLI, 48, IS A PRAGMATIC SOCIAL DEMOCRAT WITH HIS FEET FIRMLY PLANTED IN THE CENTER OF THE LABOR PARTY. IN RECENT YEARS HE HAS GAINED EXPERIENCE IN FOREIGN AFFAIRS, SERVING ON THE STORTING FOREIGN POLICY COMMITTEE, AS CHAIRMAN OF THE NATIONAL DEFENSE REVIEW COMMISSION AND AS REPRESENTATIVE TO THE NORDIC COUNCIL. LIKE BRATTELI,HE IS A VIGOROUS SUPPORTER OF NATO AND A STRONG DEFENSE,COMMITTED TO ATLANTIC EUROPEAN AND NORDIC COOPERATION AND A GOOD FRIEND OF THE US. I HAVE HAD CLOSE CONTACT WITH HIM OVER THE YEARS AND, AS WITH BRATTELI, I HAVE GREAT RESPECT FOR HIS COMPETENCE AND APPRECIATION FOR THE ALACRITY WITH WHICH HE COOPERATES WITH US. I AM CONFIDENT THAT HE WILL BUILD UPON THE OPEN AND FRIENDLY ASSOCIATION AND THE CLOSE COOPERATION WITH US THAT HAS CHARACTERIZED HIS PREDECESSORS.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: CABINET, GOVERNMENT REFORM, PRIME MINISTER, PERSONNEL ASSIGNMENTS, PERSONNEL RESIGNATIONS, DIPLOMATIC COMMUNICATIONS, REORGANIZATIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 07 JAN 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: ShawDG
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976OSLO00070
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: DG ALTERED
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760049-0754, D760005-0479
From: OSLO
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760177/aaaacqtv.tel
Line Count: 146
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 76 OSLO 5520
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: ShawDG
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 25 MAR 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <25 MAR 2004 by izenbei0>; APPROVED <29 JUL 2004 by ShawDG>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: RECOMMENDATION FOR PRESIDENTIAL MESSAGES ON NORWEGIAN GOVERNMENT CHANGE NEXT WEEK.
TAGS: PFOR, PGOV, NO, US, (BRATTELI, TRYGVE), (NORDLI, ODVAR)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006